

URBAN CORRIDORS – ALASKAN WAY VIADUCT & SEAWALL PROJECT

BRIEFING PAPER

Prepared for the
April 2003 Transportation Commission Meeting

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Approved by: John Conrad, Asst. Secretary Engineering and Regional Operations

PURPOSE:

To provide an update on the project, with a focus on recent activities and progress.

ACTION/OUTCOME:

The Commission is informed about current events on the Alaskan Way Viaduct and Seattle Seawall Project.

BACKGROUND:

During the last few months, the project team has been revising the scope and developing design plans that reflect scaled back versions of the original full corridor. The focus has been on the most seismically vulnerable portion along the central waterfront and specifically addresses the existing viaduct and seawall. Every effort has been made to thoroughly analyze the most technically feasible, publicly acceptable and cost effective solutions that should be considered in the Environmental Impact Statement. In addition, activities of the bridge inspection, maintenance, traffic, emergency response and project development teams have been more fully coordinated.

DISCUSSION:

While project options have been reduced since last fall to a range of \$2.4-\$4.7 Billion dollar range, the goal continues to be to lower these even further. Each of the alternatives, rebuild, aerial and tunnel are being refined as new information on soil conditions, traffic modeling information and engineering feasibility has become available. The most practical design variations at the south, central and northern sectors of the project area are being determined to potentially reduce costs while retaining the ability to mix and match these for each of the options.

The City of Seattle proposed the investigation of a surface plan as a measure to lower costs and to meet the intent of the project. Two surface options have emerged and are currently being investigated. They include a smaller four-lane bypass tunnel with the remaining viaduct traffic on an expanded Alaskan Way and an all-surface option. Traffic modeling is being conducted to determine the impact of these possibilities in the corridor.

A series of working sessions has been conducted with staff and management from ferries to develop the best range of alternatives to accommodate the future traffic and pedestrian

needs at Colman Dock. Both on and off site locations have been identified for holding of vehicles. Ingress and egress issues have been addressed and the variations will be incorporated in the environmental analysis. Two pedestrian bridge locations will also be evaluated.

To ensure that all aspects of a potential of retrofit were thoroughly considered, a study has been conducted to determine if a retrofit or rebuild designed to current seismic code would be feasible and less costly. The results of that study will be available in early April.

Risk Management and Reduction:

A WSDOT risk reduction and management team has been formed to manage and coordinate work activities between the project development staff, bridge inspectors, NW Region and traffic. The primary objective of the risk management and reduction effort is to update the emergency response plan should the viaduct fail in an earthquake or be determined unusable. The plan will also include a traffic management plan if Alaskan Way was no longer available to traffic due to failure of the Seattle seawall. The update should be completed later this summer.

The team is also coordinating the inspection scheduling on the viaduct. On March 22nd a tour of the viaduct was held for Legislators and Leadership Group members to see the condition of the viaduct “up close and personal”.

RECOMMENDATION:

No action by the Commission is requested.

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